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SUBJECT: MORALES, MAS WIN RESOUNDING ELECTION VICTORY

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¶1. Summary: President Evo Morales and his ruling Movement Toward Socialism party (MAS) won a resounding victory in national elections on December 6. Parallel vote counts show Morales won re-election with approximately 63 percent of the vote and that the MAS won at least 24 of 36 Senate seats. Local press project the MAS reached their goal of a two-thirds majority in the overall Plurinational Assembly (Congress). Election observers reported a generally peaceful and orderly process. In his victory speech, Morales promised to "accelerate the pace of change" but called for dialogue with opposition groups. End summary.

#### Morales Sweeps to Victory

¶2. President Morales appears to have achieved his goal of winning re-election and substantial majorities in both houses of the Plurinational Assembly. Parallel vote counts by both the media and electoral observers indicate that Morales won re-election with approximately 63 percent, tracking closely with pre-election surveys (Reftel). Main opposition challenger Manfred Reyes Villa captured between 27 and 28 percent, some six points higher than anticipated, while second-place opposition candidate Samuel Doria Medina took six percent of the vote, lower than surveys estimated. The third major opposition candidate, Rene Joaquin, won slightly less than three percent of the vote. The National Electoral Court has stated that it will release its first (unofficial) vote totals by December 8, with certified results expected within a week. President Morales will be inaugurated on January 22, 2010.

¶3. News reports awarded the MAS either 24 or 25 Senate seats, with official results likely necessary before awarding the fourth Senate seat in Chuquisaca and Beni Departments. Parallel vote counts awarded the MAS all four seats in La Paz, Oruro, and Potosi Departments, three seats in Cochabamba, and two seats in Santa Cruz, Tarija, and Pando. Reyes Villa's PPB party won the remaining 11 or 12 seats. Neither Doria Medina nor Joaquin were projected to have won any Senate seats. The MAS appears to have won in six of the nine departments, partially due to the split opposition.

¶4. In the Plurinational Assembly's lower house, news reports project that the MAS took up to 85 Deputy seats (out of 130 total), with Reyes Villa's Progress for Bolivia party (PPB) in second with 38. Doria Medina's National Unity party and Rene Joaquin's Social Alliance are estimated to have taken only three seats each. If the MAS takes 25 Senate seats and 85 Deputy positions, they would reach almost exactly two-thirds of the overall Plurinational Assembly, i.e., 110 out of 166 combined seats in total. (Note: With a two-thirds overall majority, the MAS would be able to pass required Constitutional implementing legislation and amend the Constitution without needing any opposition support. End note.) The new legislators are expected to enter into session for the first time on January 6, 2010.

¶5. In international voting, exact figures were not available, but initial reports indicated that Morales won a large majority in Argentina, perhaps over 90 percent, and slimmer majorities in Spain and Brazil. Local media reported that Reyes Villa won in the U.S., taking up to 60 percent of the vote. International voting was

estimated at three percent of the total.

#### Election Observers Affirm Process, Results

¶6. Electoral observation missions, including the OAS, European Union, Carter Center, and local group Bolivia Transparente all indicated the elections were free and fair, with a minimum of violence or irregularities. The observer groups commended the National Electoral Court for its coordination of the elections, which ran smoothly in almost all cases. Bureaucratic mistakes, such as incorrect delivery of election lists to individual election centers, were quickly remedied by the National Electoral Court or departmental affiliates. Charge and Poloffs, accredited by the National Electoral Court, observed local election centers and saw no irregularities.

¶7. Bolivia Transparente reported that 94.4 percent of all election centers guaranteed the opportunity for a secure and private vote. The monitoring group noted only one accusation of coerced voting (in the Camacho district in the western Altiplano area). Local news media reported outbreaks of minor violence in Santa Cruz and Pando Departments, but did not report any serious injuries or deaths.

#### Morales Calls for Change, Dialogue

¶8. In his victory speech from the Presidential Palace on election night, Morales said "having obtained more than two-thirds of the Senators and Deputies obliges me to accelerate the process of change" in Bolivia. He called for opposition groups to work with him for change and underlined that his next government would be

characterized by dialogue. Separately, local news daily La Razon reported that Morales said while voting that, "Constitutionally, this is my first election under the new Bolivian Constitution," indicating that he could seek another term of office in five years. Creamer